

**Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1999**  
**Calhoon MEBA School**  
**Easton, MD**

OPENING REMARKS

Bill Eglinton, Chairman of the Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC), opened the meeting at 8:05 a.m. MERPAC members in attendance were Mohan Dadlani, Richard Daschbach, Lou Edmondson, Bill Eglinton, Beth Gedney, Nick Grassia, Katie Haven, Lynn Korwatch, Jeanne Kraus, Andrew McGovern, Joe Murphy, Roy Murphy, Sinclair Oubre, Bill Sembler, Lisa Streckfus, and Ellen Warner. Mr. Eglinton introduced MERPAC's sponsor, Rear Admiral (RADM) Robert C. North.

RADM North thanked MERPAC members and members of the public for attending. He remarked that the agenda (enclosure (1)) included many topics that are of high interest to the Office of Marine Safety and Environmental Protection (G-M). He specifically thanked members of both MERPAC and the public for their efforts in STCW implementation.

RADM North just returned from a two-week trip to Europe where he had the opportunity to speak before several maritime forums about different topics. He heard a recurring theme in his contacts with foreign maritime experts: Recruitment and retention are the worst problems faced by the maritime industry.

RADM North will be hosting the Prevention Through People (PTP) champions when they meet in October. He will ask them if they agree that recruiting and retention are a problem in the U.S. and if so, what will happen, in 20-30 years, when shipping doubles or triples as expected. It is possible that, because ships will be getting larger and larger, there won't necessarily be a need to double or triple the number of mariners to man them.

RADM North feels that manning and retention in the merchant marine is a good future issue for MERPAC to consider.

He also spoke to several maritime leaders about the link between technology and operations, a major part of which involves the human element. Although technology presents many opportunities to improve our operations, it also raises the risk if not properly understood and applied by the human element. The mastering of technology by mariners translates that technology into safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible operations. Accordingly, the most important link between the two is the human element.

RADM North recounted that a recent collision between the vessels NORWEGIAN DREAM and EVER DECENT in the English Channel raises the issue of the relationship between technology, operations, and the human element.

An editorial in the Lloyd's List spoke about the collision, "Everyone wanted to know how two modern vessels – the cruise ship NORWEGIAN DREAM and the containership EVER DECENT – equipped with all the latest technology and sailed by well trained crews could crash into each other? Had the vessels been shrouded in fog, or hampered by high seas, the accident might have been more understandable – though none the less inexcusable. But the fact that the visibility was good and the weather fair has added to the puzzlement. The two companies involved, Norwegian Cruise Lines and Evergreen Marine, have good safety records and are among the largest maritime enterprises in the world."

RADM North added another question: If this happens to very competent operators – what does it tell us about the risk to safety and the environment that sub-standard operators pose? Consider the human element.

He reminded those in attendance that people are not only part of the cause of most accidents but they are also the best means of prevention.

The human element must be considered from a number of different aspects:

1. The recruitment of mariners into the industry for careers at sea;
2. The training and qualification of those mariners, including employment of technology;
3. Adequate levels of manning given the level of technology employed;
4. Ship management that recognizes gaps between technology and operations;
5. And international and national standards and regimes to address the above.

RADM North advised that he feels MERPAC is a perfect fit for #2, particularly with the task statement presently being addressed. MERPAC's proposed performance measure guidelines for mariners will greatly assist the Coast Guard and ultimately the United States in complying with the 1995 amendments to STCW.

In addition, MERPAC has provided recommendations to the Coast Guard on many regulatory initiatives and policy guidance, particularly with respect to STCW. The Coast Guard will continue to ask MERPAC for advice as we endeavor to implement the STCW Convention in the United States. MERPAC has also assisted in the Coast Guard's efforts to formulate U.S. positions on standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for our negotiations at IMO.

STCW, with the '95 amendments, has provided a framework to define the current requirements of training and qualifications. Gap closure between technology and operations is achieved by the requirements for personnel to prove their ability in various competencies through a combination of training and experience. Clearly, as technology advances and time passes, future trends will require us to modify the current requirements of STCW – the U.S. appears to have a good start. It will be interesting to follow the activity as IMO works through the first round of assessment of full and complete implementation of STCW by flag administrations.

RADM North continued. But is STCW enough? Manning levels over the years have been continuously reduced as technology has advanced and been used to replace seafarers. Are we now at critical mass in terms of crew size? Are manning levels adequate to safely operate – to make the best use of technology?

One of the strategies that we in the U.S. are using to bridge the gap between technology and operations is a human element based, non-regulatory partnership, with the maritime industry “Prevention Through People” (PTP) effort. The PTP vision statement continues to be: “To achieve the world’s safest, most cost-effective and environmentally sound maritime transportation system, by emphasizing the role of people in preventing casualties and pollution.” Our strategy involves human error detection, assessment, and prevention techniques such as root cause investigation analysis. The principles of PTP are five fold:

- Honor the mariner. Seek and respect the opinion of those who do the work afloat and ashore.
- Maintain balance. Apply cost effective solutions to safety and environmental issues.
- Seek non-regulatory solutions. Encourage and emphasize incentives and innovation. Recognize and support those who seek to rise and remain above the minimum levels of regulatory compliance.
- Take a quality approach. Seek a better, and more cost effective solution. Advocate the principle that process improvements and cost savings go hand in hand with safe operations. –and—
- Share commitment. PTP is the responsibility of both the industry and the government.

Currently the Coast Guard is actively pursuing its second year of the PTP focus plan. Our focus plan is a list of short term objectives taken from the broader PTP implementation plan and designed to provide immediate results on some of the current major issues facing the U.S. maritime industry. Among the issues that we are addressing in our focus plan this year are STCW and ISM implementation. Our next PTP meeting will be held in Washington in October with our industry PTP “champions.” These champions are a group of U.S. industry leaders that provide a broad view of the maritime industry to us as a flag administration and have helped in developing and implementing PTP throughout the industry. The agenda for our next meeting will specifically address plans to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of trained and qualified seafarers by 2020.

There clearly remains a challenge to implement and employ today’s technology in a safe, effective, and environmentally sound manner. And while we face that challenge we must keep an eye on the coming technology of tomorrow and the new challenges that will need to be addressed.

Perhaps we have done more to develop technology than in using it well. However, no matter what level of technology is implemented, we must always remember that people are the key to implementing and using the technology that has been developed to create a quality shipping industry for the benefit of the world.

RADM North explained that a Marine Transportation System (MTS) has been established by

the Department of Transportation (DOT), Coast Guard, the Marine Administration (MARAD), and other agencies to ensure that as the levels of marine traffic increase in the future, U.S. waterways will be able to provide a safe, environmentally sound, efficient, and secure means of transportation.

RADM North apologized again for the extensive delay in getting our membership slates approved by the Secretary. He assured the members that this issue has the Commandant's personal attention, and that the lack of success is not through the Coast Guard's lack of effort. He thanked the members whose terms have expired for their continued participation and efforts.

Mr. Eglinton thanked RADM North and introduced Commander (CDR) Steve Boyle, Executive Director of MERPAC. CDR Boyle welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced CAPT Peter Richardson, as the new Chief of the Office of Operating and Environmental Standards. He also mentioned LCDR Luke Hardin, although LCDR Hardin was unable to attend the meeting. Citing LCDR Hardin's background in Regional Examination Centers, CDR Boyle stated that industry's message has been heard to bring officers into G-MSO with maritime personnel background.

CDR Boyle asked MERPAC members to compare its work with the Coast Guard's performance plan goals. Members will receive individual copies of the Plan when it has been published.

The list of Master Recommendations has been updated and MERPAC members were provided with copies of the updated pages. The Coast Guard's goal is to provide members with an updated Master Recommendations list at each meeting.

Mr. Eglinton then made comments. He provided an update on the work of the 14 subcommittees, comprising more than 100 members of the public as well as MERPAC members, dealing with Task Statement number 19. Seven subcommittees have completed their work and their submissions will be considered by the full committee later today. Three other groups have very recently completed their work, and MERPAC feels that the January 15, 2000 deadline will be met.

MERPAC expects the Coast Guard to consider the submissions voted in today. Most of them are outcome performance guidelines, and the Coast Guard needs to ensure their completeness and compatibility, and then seek industry input wherever possible, such as in the Federal Register. MERPAC recommends they be field tested in maritime training institutions. Mr. Eglinton expressed his satisfaction and appreciation to all who have worked so hard through the summer in order to meet their deadlines.

Mr. Eglinton called for a vote on the minutes from the previous MERPAC meeting. The previous meeting's minutes were unanimously adopted.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Eglinton called on each subcommittee chairman to give a brief report of the status of the subcommittee's work. After this had been accomplished, Mr. Eglinton reported that those subcommittees who have not completed their work will be continuing it this morning. He also requested that MERPAC and public members from subcommittees which have completed their work assist those who have not done so.

Mr. Eglinton then asked Ms. Ellen Warner for a report on MERPAC's PTP standing working group. Ms. Warner reported that she and Mr. Andrew McGovern are both involved with their own subcommittees, but had also observed other subcommittees to ensure that PTP principles are being observed in them during their endeavors.

### NEW BUSINESS

CAPT Bennett of the National Maritime Center (NMC) then briefed the committee members on two task statements proposed for MERPAC's action. Task #20 deals with Permissible methods of Demonstrating Competence in Crisis Management and Human Behavior. Task Statement #21 deals with Permissible Simulator Standards for Demonstrating Competence in Ratings Forming Part of a Navigational Watch. Joe Murphy advised CAPT Bennett that he has built crisis management into his subcommittee's work.

CAPT Bennett then described the process the Coast Guard will use with the performance assessment guidelines once they have been forwarded by MERPAC. The Coast Guard will review the guidance and make appropriate changes in format, ensuring that the degree of specificity is the same for all 14 products. This could involve changes in technical content. The adjusted guidelines will then be published in the Federal Register with a request for comments from the public. The Coast Guard will mention that the original MERPAC recommendations may be found in the official docket. After suitable time is allowed for public comment, the Coast Guard will make necessary changes to the guidelines, and then republish them as national guidelines. They will not be mandatory but rather guidelines for everybody's use. Training institutions may submit different performance measures to NMC for consideration and approval. The national guidelines may be modified as necessary to adapt to new or better assessment methods.

There has been some concern that there is little onboard assessment due to a shortage of designated examiners. CAPT Bennett stated that he felt that was because potential examiners don't know what to submit for their program, but once the assessment guidelines are published, he feels that the number of designated examiners and onboard assessors will increase significantly.

There has also been some concern expressed by mariners about designated examiners' personal liability for onboard assessment. CAPT Bennett does not view this as a problem—the onboard assessor is only stating by his signature that on a certain day, he observed the applicant satisfactorily complete a certain task. CAPT Bennett made an analogy to a state's motor vehicle licensing process. The individual who gives a practical driving examination to an applicant is not held accountable if that new licensee later causes an auto accident.

Jeanne Kraus advised that Batelle is developing onboard assessment guidelines for the Coast Guard R&D Center. She asked how these would relate to MERPAC's recommendations. Joe Murphy replied that Massachusetts Maritime Academy had worked with Batelle in developing these guidelines, but they were not being specifically developed as guidelines, rather that Batelle was determining if the tasks were appropriate for mariners in an operational environment. The Batelle work is ongoing. RADM North added that Batelle was not creating assessment criteria but rather the process of onboard assessment. Their report will be a report to be used as reference material, not a regulation or NVIC.

Bill Eglinton asked what proof will be given to an individual after he /she gets approved as a designated examiner. CAPT Bennett replied that the mariner will receive a letter from the Coast Guard, listing in which competencies he is authorized to act as a designated examiner.

Amy Morley-Greenspan of the public asked how REC personnel will determine if all items were actually signed off by a designated examiner. CAPT Bennett replied that 85% of all unlimited license mariners are from academies, and they have an oversight program which will prevent this from becoming a problem. It is anticipated that there will be only a few other programs for the Coast Guard to oversee. A hawsepiper's training record book (TRB) will be accepted at face value, with a few spot checks to assure designated examiners were actually qualified. Since REC's are required to keep the TRB's in the seaman's file, this will be easy to check if questions are raised in the future.

Chuck Pillsbury of MITAGS asked if a designated examiner/onboard assessor has to keep a record of the people he signs off. CAPT Bennett said there is no U.S. requirement to keep such a record, but it would be prudent for a designated examiner/onboard assessor to do so.

CDR Boyle then made comments about the Coast Guard's efforts to implement the provisions of the STCW Convention. RADM North chartered an STCW Implementation Focus and Coordination Team last November to develop a plan to ensure that the STCW Convention is given full and complete effect by February 1, 2002.

The team developed a detailed, comprehensive plan for identifying, coordinating, and monitoring STCW implementation. RADM North wants to share with MERPAC the results of the team's plan and to solicit its comments as we continue to move forward with STCW implementation. Each MERPAC member was given detailed information from the plan.

CDR Boyle stated that we have already factored in MERPAC as an essential resource toward STCW Implementation. MERPAC's contribution will be critical toward the successful completion of our goal. We welcome MERPAC's constructive comments on our STCW implementation efforts. CDR Boyle then thanked MERPAC for its continued support on this issue.

RADM North added that this is his management tool to ensure that we meet the February 2002 deadline. The Coast Guard cannot do this alone. NMC and G-MSO will report to RADM North on a monthly basis showing him what progress has been made. Resources will be re-programmed internally as needed to ensure that we meet the January 2002 deadline.

Chris Krusa of MARAD then announced that MARAD was seeking volunteers to act as industry representatives for onsite audit teams which will audit maritime academies. Each team will have 1 representative from the Coast Guard and MARAD, and 2 from maritime academies and the maritime industry. Volunteers should be senior U.S. masters, chief mates, or chief engineers with substantial sailing experience and some familiarity with STCW. RADM North added that the Coast Guard is waiting for comments on its proposed auditing guidelines from the maritime academies.

CAPT Bennett then advised MERPAC members that the point paper Batelle was preparing concerning assessment procedures had just been received. All MERPAC members received a copy as well as the public. CAPT Bennett stated that the development of detailed assessment guidelines is consistent with our path toward STCW implementation. He added that there is no tasking for MERPAC in this point paper, it is merely informational.

The meeting then broke up into working groups at 0935.

The meeting was reconvened at 1115.

Bill Eglinton explained that MERPAC will discuss the seven subcommittee projects already submitted. After discussion and voting, the projects will be submitted to the Coast Guard with recommendations, if appropriate.

Andrew McGovern gave a report for the bridge team resource management subcommittee. It used Table A of the STCW Code as a model. After minimal discussion, a motion was made to accept the package from the subcommittee as it stands and forward it to the Coast Guard. After seconding, a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously without additional recommendations.

Jeanne Kraus gave a report for the Designated Duty Engineer / Officer in Charge of Engineering Watch subcommittee. It started with a project completed by the maritime academies, made some changes, held a conference call and held a two-day meeting. There were six items for which no consensus could be reached: taking over the watch; performing watch duties; using the log book; handing over the watch; starting a steam boiler; and, monitoring a steam boiler. The subcommittee also wondered how mariners with prior military service would demonstrate proficiency or get credit. The subcommittee also wanted to know if there is a need to distinguish between steam and/or diesel and gas turbine practical experience and demonstration. After minimal discussion, a motion was made to accept the package from the subcommittee as it stands and a recommendation that the Coast Guard further address the six items for which consensus could not be reached. After seconding, a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Roy Murphy and Lou Edmondson gave a report for the Advanced Firefighting subcommittee. It collected information from many firefighting organizations, reduced it into a single strawman and mailed it to the subcommittee members for comment. Two teleconference calls were used to produce unanimity on the subcommittee for acceptance. The only possible

discrepancy was a question about how general or specific should the subcommittees get with the details of guidelines. They chose to be more specific, figuring the Coast Guard could always use less specific guidelines. After minimal discussion, a motion was made to accept the package from the subcommittee as it stands and forward it to the Coast Guard. After seconding, a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously without additional recommendations.

Ellen Warner gave a report for the Master/Chief Mate > 500 gross tons subcommittee. The subcommittee felt that applicants should have to take ARPA and shiphandling courses. Most of their performance guidelines were listed as in-service experience, and several items will have to be handled as on-board assessments. The subcommittee was not satisfied with performance guidelines—they were more supportive of onboard assessments than testing or making applicants complete courses. Andrew McGovern mentioned that some guidelines in this group required service on ISM or ISO vessels, and he asked why, especially when there are not many vessels so designated at the present time. Andrew also asked why the performance objective for bridgework procedures required that the applicant pass an approved bridge team management course, yet did not give the option for onboard assessment. A motion was made to accept the package from the subcommittee as it stands, with Andrew McGovern's comments/suggestions attached. After seconding, a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Bill Sembler then gave a report for the Officer in Charge of a Navigation Watch subcommittee. This subcommittee had many volunteers from the public, and Mr. Sembler thanked them for their assistance, giving special thanks to Mr. Trowbridge of Houston Marine for allowing part of Houston's course syllabus to be included as part of the package. After minimal discussion, a motion was made to accept the package from the subcommittee as it stands and forward it to the Coast Guard. After seconding, a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously without additional recommendations.

Lisa Streckfus gave a report for the Ratings Forming Part of an Engineering Watch subcommittee. The performance measures submitted by this subcommittee are very detailed in nature, and Ms. Streckfus recommended that the Coast Guard evaluate this detail and possibly remove some of the specificity. After minimal discussion, a motion was made to accept the package from the subcommittee as it stands and forward it to the Coast Guard. After seconding, a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously, including the recommendation on specificity.

Sinclair Oubre gave a report for the Ratings Forming Part of a Navigation Watch subcommittee. This subcommittee used the IMO model for helmsmanship and a Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship proposed course as a strawman as guidance for their draft. Andrew McGovern noted that the knot tying section called for a written test, while the STCW Code called for a practical demonstration. He recommended that practical demonstration should also be required in the subcommittee's package. A motion was made to accept the package from the subcommittee as it stands, with Andrew McGovern's comments/suggestions attached. After seconding, a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.



Mr. Eglinton reported that work continues on the following subcommittees: Medical/First Aid; Tanker—RoRo; and, All Survival and Rescue Boat. Mr. Eglinton also reported that the following subcommittees had completed their work this morning: Chief Engineer/2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer > 2000 Kw; GMDSS; and, Officer in Charge of a Navigation Watch for Vessels < 500 GT. In addition, the Offshore Competencies subcommittee finished the work it had before it, but there is still some work to do in determining whether there is a special need for guidelines for vessels of 3000 or more but less than 6000 ITC. Since hard copy of the packages is not yet ready for MERPAC members to review, Mr. Eglinton deferred discussion on these packages until the teleconference call in November/December. CDR Boyle suggested that since MERPAC was trying to meet the January, 2000 deadline, and in lieu of a teleconference call, it might want to consider moving its next meeting up from March or April to January in order to facilitate members' discussion on the remaining subcommittee packages.

Bob Alario of OMSA and a member of the Offshore Competencies subcommittee requested that MERPAC consider his subcommittee's package at this meeting. Mr. Eglinton declined to do so because MERPAC members had not had time to review the submittal. Richard Daschbach seconded Mr. Eglinton's statement—he felt that to rush through the package would be a disservice to the subcommittee's efforts and be unfair to MERPAC members. Mr. Daschbach said that he hopes to finish the package within a week and he will forward it to the Coast Guard for distribution to MERPAC members at that time.

Lynn Korwatch suggested that MERPAC consider proposed Task Statements #20 (enclosure (2)) and #21 (enclosure (3)).

Joe Murphy advised that of the four items contained in Task Statement #20, his subcommittee was already addressing three. He volunteered to have his subcommittee take over responsibility of this task statement. A motion was made to accept Task Statement #20 and, after seconding, was passed unanimously. A motion was made to turn the task statement over to Joe Murphy's subcommittee and, after seconding, this recommendation passed unanimously. Katie Haven, Lou Edmondson, Lisa Streckfus, Roy Murphy, and Ellen Warner volunteered to assist Mr. Murphy. Either John Bobb or CAPT Bennett of NMC will act as the technical representative for this task statement.

SUBJ: MINUTES OF MERPAC MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 29, 1999 AT THE CALHOON MEBA  
SCHOOL IN EASTON, MD

A motion was made to accept Task Statement #21 and, after seconding, was passed unanimously. Andrew McGovern volunteered to chair the subcommittee. Lynn Korwatch, Nick Grassia, and Sinclair Oubre volunteered to assist Mr. McGovern. Either John Bobb or CAPT Bennett of NMC will act as the technical representative for this task statement.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. After seconding, the meeting was adjourned at 1225.

---

Steven J. Boyle, CDR, U.S Coast Guard  
Executive Director, MERPAC

---

Bill Eglinton  
Chairman, MERPAC

---

Date

---

Date

- Encl: (1) Meeting Agenda  
(2) Task Statement 20, Permissible Methods of Demonstrating Competence in Crisis Management and Human Behavior  
(3) Task Statement 21, Permissible Simulator Standards for Demonstrating Competence in Ratings Forming Part of a Navigational Watch